

REMARKS

This is in response to the Office Action dated December 07, 2006. In view of the foregoing amendments and following representations, reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Upon entry of this amendment, claims 1-9, 13-15 and 22 are cancelled; and claim 10 has been rewritten in independent form. Thus, claims 10-12 and 16-21 are currently pending in the present application. No new matter has been added.

Initially, it is noted with appreciation that the Examiner has indicated that claims 16-21 have been allowed, and that claims 10-12 contain allowable subject matter and would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Accordingly, in order to place the application in condition for allowance, rejected claims 2, 3, 9 and 22 have been cancelled; and allowable claim 10 has been rewritten in independent form.

In view of the above, it is submitted that the present application is now clearly in condition for allowance. The Examiner therefore is requested to pass this case to issue.

In the event that the Examiner has any comments or suggestions of a nature necessary to place this case in condition for allowance, then the Examiner is requested to contact Applicant's undersigned attorney by telephone to promptly resolve any remaining matters.

Respectfully submitted,

Kiyoji AOSHIMA et al.

By: 

Michael S. Huppert
Registration No. 40,268
Attorney for Applicants

MSH/kjf
Washington, D.C. 20006-1021
Telephone (202) 721-8200
Facsimile (202) 721-8250
February 28, 2007